# A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEEDE:

## OR, THE LEAST MEASVRE OF GRACE,

*that is or can be effectuall*

to ſalvation.

*London*, Printed by *Iohn Legatt*.

# To the Right Honorable and Vertuous Lady, the Lady Margaret, Countesse of Cumberland, Grace and Peace.

RIght Honourable, the kingdome of Heaven, of which the Scripture speaketh so oft, is properly a certaine state or condition, whereby we stand in the favour and love of God, in and by Christ. And this Kingdome is compared to a Graine of Mustard-seede, to teach us that a man is even at that instant already entered into the kingdome of heaven, when the Lord that good Husbandman hath cast but some little portion of faith or repentance into the ground of

the heart; yea, though it be but as one Graine of Mustard-seede. Of this little Graine I have penned this Treatise, in quantitie answerable thereto: and I now present the same to your Ladyship, not to supply your want, (for I hope you are stored with many Graines of this kind) but to performe some dutie on my part. Hoping therefore that your Ladiship will reade and accept the same, I take my leave, commending you to the blessing and protection of the Almightie.

Your Honours

to command,

W. Perkins.

# A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEED,

*or, the least measure of* grace, that is, or can be effectuall to salvation.

IT is a very necessary point to bee knowne, *What is the least measure of Grace that can befall the true childe of God, lesser then which, there is no grace effectuall to salvation.* For first of all, the right understanding of this point, is the very foundation of true comfort unto all troubled and touched consciences. Secondly, it is a notable meanes to

ſtirre up thankefulneſſe in them that have any grace at all; when they ſhall in examination of themſelves conſider that they have received of God the leaſt meaſure of grace or more. Thirdly, it will bee an inducement, and a ſpurre unto many careleſſe and unrepentant perſons, to embrace the Goſpel, and to beginne repentance for their ſinnes; when they ſhall perceive, and that by the Word of God, that God accepts the very ſeedes and rudiments of faith and repentance at the firſt, though they bee but in meaſure as a Graine of Muſterd-ſeed. Now then, for opening and clearing of this point? I will ſet downe five ſeverall concluſions, in

such order as one shall confirme and explaine the other, and one depend upon the other.

## 1. Conclusion.

*A man that doth but begin to bee converted, is even at that instant, the very child of God, though inwardly hee bee more carnall then spiritnall.*

### *The Exposition.*

IN a man there must bee considered three things, the substance of the body and soule, whereof man is said to consist; the faculties placed in the soule and exercised in the body, as understanding, will, affections: the in-

tegritie and puritie of the faculties, whereby they are conformable to the will of God, and beare his Image. And ſince the fall of *Adam*, man is not deprived of his ſubſtance or of the powers and faculties of his ſoule, but onely of the third, which is the puritie, or integritie of nature. And therefore the converſion of a ſinner, whereof the concluſion ſpeaketh; is not the change of the ſubſtance of man, or of the faculties of the ſoule: but a renewing and reſtoring of that puritie and holineſſe which was loſt by mans fall, with the aboliſhment of that naturall corruption that is in all the powers of the ſoule. This is the worke of God, and of God

alone, and that on this manner. First of all, when it pleaseth God to worke a change in any, hee doth it not first in one part, then afterward in another: as hee that repaires a decayed house by peecemeale: but the worke, both for the beginning, continuance and accomplishment, is in the whole man, and every part at once, specially in the minde, conscience, will, and affections: as on the contrary, when *Adam* lost the image of God, hee lost it in every part. Secondly, the conversion of a sinner is not wrought all at one instant, but in continuance of time: and that by certaine measures and degrees. And a man is then in the first degree of his conversion,

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when the Holy Ghoſt by the meanes of the Word, inſpires him with ſome ſpirituall motions, and begins to regenerate and renew the inward powers of his ſoule; and he may in this caſe very fitly bee compared to the night in the firſt dawning of the day, in which though the darkeneſſe remaine and be more in quantitie then the light, yet the Sunne hath already caſt ſome beames of light into the ayre, whereupon wee tearme it the breaking of the day. Now then, the very point which I teach, is, that a man at this inſtant, and in this very ſtate, (God as yet having but layde certain beginnings of true converſion in his heart) is the very childe of God, and that not onely

onely in the eternall purpose of God (as all the elect are) but indeede by actuall adoption: and this is plaine by a manifest reason: There bee foure speciall workes of grace in every childe of God: his union with Christ, his adoption, justification, and conversion: and these foure, are wrought all at one instant, so as for order of time, neither goes before, nor after other: and yet in regard of order of nature, Vnion with Christ, Iustification, and Adoption, goe before the inward conversion of a sinner, it being the fruite and effect of all. Vpon this it followeth necessarily, that a sinner in the very first act of his conversion, is justified, adopted, and incorporated into

into the mysticall body of Christ. In the Parable of the prodigall sonne, the father with joy receives his wicked childe; but when? surely when hee saw him comming a farre off, and when as yet hee had made no confession or humiliation to his Father, but onely had conceived with himselfe a purpose to returne and to say, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and against thee, &c. And *Paul* saith of many of the Corinthians, that hee could not speake unto them as spirituall men, but as carnall, even babes in Christ, 1 *Corinth.* 3. 1. When *David* reprooved by *Nathan* did but beginne to repent and to say, *I have sinned*, presently *Nathan* the Prophet of the

Lord

Lord said, *The Lord hath taken away thy sinne.* Of this thing *David* seemes to speake of in the 32. *Psal.* v. 5. *I said* (that is, I purposed and thought with my selfe) *I will confesse against my selfe mine unrighteousnesse, and thou forgavest mine iniquities.* Vpon these words *Augustine* saith, *Marke, hee doth not confesse, but promiseth to confesse; and God forgiveth him.* Againe, *There be* (saith hee) *three syllables*, peccavi, *I have sinned: and from these three syllables the flame of a sacrifice did ascend into Heaven before God.* Chrysostome saith; *Say thou hast sinned, and thou hast loosed thy sinne.* And Ambrose saith: *If hee said, I will confesse, and obtained pardon before hee confessed, how much more when*

*he had confessed, saying, I know mine iniquitie, was his sinne pardoned?* Gregory on this Psal. saith, *Marke how speedily pardon comes, and how great is the commendation of Gods mercy, in that pardon comes together with the desire of confession, and remission comes to the heart, before confession breake foorth in speech.*

## II. Conclusion.

*The first materiall beginnings of the conversion of a sinner, or the smallest measure of renewing grace, have the promises of this life, and the life to come.*

### *The Exposition.*

THE beginnings of conversion must bee distinguished: some are the beginnings

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of preparation, ſome beginnings of compoſition. Beginnings of preparation are ſuch as bring under, tame and ſubdue the ſtubbornneſſe of mans nature, without making any change at all: of this ſort are the accuſations of the conſcience by the miniſtery of the law, feares and terrours ariſing thence, compunction of heart, which is the apprehenſion of Gods anger againſt ſinne. Now theſe and the like, I exclude in the concluſion; for though they goe before to prepare a ſinner to his converſion following, yet are they no graces of God, but fruites both of the law, being the miniſtery of death, as alſo of an accuſing conſcience. Beginnings of compoſition

ſition I tearme all thoſe inward motions and inclinations of Gods Spirit, that follow after the worke of the law upon the conſcience, and riſe upon the meditation of the Goſpel, that promiſeth righteouſneſſe and life everlaſting by Chriſt: out of which motion the converſion of a ſinner ariſeth, and of which it conſiſteth: what theſe are, it ſhall afterward appeare. Againe, grace muſt bee diſtinguiſhed: it is two-fold; reſtraining grace, or renewing grace. Reſtraining grace, I tearme certaine common gifts of God, ſerving onely to order and frame the outward converſation of man to the Law of God, or ſerving to bereave men of excuſe in the day of judge-

judgement. By this kind of grace, heathen men have beene liberall, just, sober, valiant, and mercifull. By it men living in the Church of God, have beene inlightned, and having tasted of the good Word of God, have rejoyced therein, and for a time outwardly conformed themselves thereto. Renewing grace is not common to all men, but proper to the elect, and it is a gift of Gods Spirit, whereby the corruption of a sinner is not onely restrained, but also mortified, and the decayed Image of God restored in righteousnesse and true holinesse. Now then the conclusion must onely bee understood of the second and not of the first: for though a man have never so much

much of this restraining grace, yet unlesse he have the Spirit of Christ to create faith in the heart, and to sanctifie him, he is as farre from salvation as another. Thus then the sense and meaning of the conclusion is, that the very least measure of saving grace and the very beginning or seedes of regeneration doe declare, and after a sort give title to men of all the mercifull promises of God, whether they concerne this life or the life to come: and are therefore approoved of God, if they bee in truth; and accepted as greater measures of grace. That which our Saviour Christ saith of the worke of miracles, Matth. 17. 20. *If ye have faith as a graine of Mustard-*

sterd-seede, yee shall say unto this mountaine, *Remoove hence to yonder place*, *and it shall remoove*, must by the law of equall proportion bee applyed to saving faith, repentance, the feare of God, and all other graces; if they be truely wrought in the heart, though they be but as small as one little graine of Musterd-seede, they shall bee sufficiently effectuall to bring foorth good workes, for which they are ordained. The Prophet *Esay* 42. 3. saith, that Christ *shall not quench the smoaking flaxe, or breake the bruised reede.* Let the comparison bee marked: fire in flaxe must bee both little and weake in quantitie as a sparke or swaine, that cannot cause a flame, but one-

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ly a ſmoke, ſpecially in a matter ſo eaſie to burne. Here then is ſignified that the gifts and graces of Gods Spirit, that are both for meaſure and ſtrength, as a ſparke or twaine of fire, ſhall not be neglected, but rather accepted and cheriſhed by Chriſt. When our Saviour Chriſt heard the young man make a confeſſion of a practice but of outward and civill righteouſneſſe, *hee looked upon him and loved him.* Marke 10. 21. and when hee heard the Scribe to ſpeake diſcreetely but one good ſpeech, that to love God with all the heart is above all ſacrifices, hee ſaid unto him, *That he was not farre from the kingdome of Heaven.* Therefore no doubt, hee will love with a more ſpeciall

love

love, and accept as the good subjects of his kingdome, those that have received a further mercy of God, to be borne anew of water and the Spirit.

## III. Conclusion.

*A constant and earnest desire to bee reconciled to God, to believe, and to repent, if it bee in a touched heart, is in acceptation with God, as reconciliation, faith, repentance it selfe,*

### *The Exposition.*

LVst or desire is two-fold, naturall, and supernaturall. Naturall is that, whose beginnings and object is in nature,

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that is, which ariseth of the naturall will of man, and affecteth such things as are thought to bee good, according to the light of nature. And this kind of desire hath his degrees, yet so as they are all limited within the compasse of nature. Some desire Riches, Honours, Pleasures, some Learning and knowledge, because it is the light and perfection of the minde: some goe further and seeke after the vertues of justice, temperance, liberalitie, &c. and thus many Heathen men have excelled. Some againe desire true happinesse, as *Balaam* did, who wished to dye the death of the righteous; because it is the propertie of nature to seeke the preservation of it selfe.

But

But here nature staies it selfe: for where the minde reveales not, the will affects not. Supernaturall desires, are such as both for their beginning and object, are above nature. For their beginning is from the Holy Ghost; and the object or matter, about which they are conversant, are things divine and spirituall which concerne the Kingdome of Heaven: and of this kind are the desires of which I speake in this place. Againe, that we may not bee deceived in our desires, but may the better discerne them from flittering and fleeting motions, I adde three restraints. First of all, the desire of reconciliation, the desire to beleeve, or the desire to repent, &c. must bee con-

constant and have continuance, otherwise it may justly bee suspected. Secondly, it must be earnest and serious; though not alwayes, yet at some times, that wee may bee able to say, with *David*, My soule desireth after thee O Lord, as the thirsty land: and, As the Hart brayeth after the rivers of water, so panteth my soule after thee O God; my soule thirsteth for God, even the living God. Thirdly, It must bee in a touched heart; for when a man is touched in conscience, the heart is cast downe, and (as much as it can) it withdrawes it selfe from God. For this cause, if then there bee any spirituall motions whereby the heart is lift up unto God, they are without

out doubt from the Spirit of God. Thus then I avouch, that the desire of reconciliation with God in Christ, is reconciliation it selfe: the desire to beleeve, is faith indeed: and the desire to repent repentance it selfe. But marke how. A desire to be reconciled, is not reconciliation in nature (for the desire is one thing, and reconciliation is another) but in Gods acceptation: for if wee being touched throughly for our sinnes, doe desire to have them pardoned, and to bee at one with God, God accepts us as reconciled. Againe, desire to beleeve, it is not faith in nature, but onely in Gods acceptation, God accepting the will for the deede. That this doctrine is the will and

Word of God, it appeares by these reasons. First of all, God hath annexed a promise of blessednesse, and of life everlasting, to the desire of grace, Matt.5. *Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall bee satisfied.* Ioh.7.38. *If any man thirst, let him come to mee, and drinke,* Revel.21. *I will give unto him which is a thirst, of the well of the water of life freely.* Now what is this to thirst? properly it is when we are in a drought or drinesse, and want drinke to refresh us, and desire it. And therefore by all resemblance, they are said to thirst after righteousnesse, that want it, and would faine have it. And they thirst after Christ, that feele themselves out of Christ and

and desire, yea long after the bloud of Christ, that they might bee refreshed with it in their consciences. Heere then wee see, that the desire of mercy, in the want of mercy, is the obtaining of mercie; and the desire to beleeve, in the want of faith, is faith. Marke then: though as yet thou want firme and lively grace, yet art thou not altogether voide of grace, if thou canst unfeignedly desire it, thy desire is the seede, conception, or bud of that which thou wantest. Now is the spring time of the ingrafted word, or the immortall seede cast into the furrowes of thy heart: waite but a while, using the good meanes to this end appointed, and thou shalt see

the leaves, blossomes and fruit will shortly follow after. Secondly, the desire of any good thing is accepted of God, as the lively invocation of the holy name, Psal. 10. *God heareth the desire of the poore.* Psal. 145. *Hee will fulfill the desire of them that feare him.* When *Moses* said nothing, but onely desired in heart the helpe and protection of God at the Red Sea, the Lord said unto him, Why cryest thou unto me? *Exod.* 14. 15. And when wee know not to pray as wee ought, *Paul* saith, that the spirit maketh request by the inward groanes of the heart, *Rom.* 8. 26. Hence I gather, that when a man in his weakenesse prayes with sighes and groanes, for the gift of a live-

ly faith, the want whereof he findes in himselfe, his very prayer on this manner made, is as truely in acceptation with God, as a prayer made in a lively faith. And here it is further to be considered, that *Paul* calles these *groanes unspeakeable*, and why? Of most interpreters they are thought to be unspeakeable by reason of their greatnesse, and this I will not deny: it seemes nevertheless that they are so teatmed by reason of their weakenesse, for they are commonly small, weake, and confused in the hearts of GODS children when they are distressed: and the words following seeme to import thus much: for when it had beene said that Gods Spirit in

us makes request with groanes not to bee uttered: Some man might haply reply and say, If wee cannot discerne and utter these groanes in our selves, what are wee the better? *Paul* addes therefore, that although we know not, yet God a searcher of all things hidden in the heart, knowes the minde and meaning of the Spirit. And thus the words yet further affoord a comfortable instruction in the children of God, namely, that being in distresse, whether in life or death, if by grace wee can but sigh, or sob unto God, though it bee weake and feeble, like the faint pulse in the time of death; wee, or the Spirit of God in us, doe indeed make request unto God that shall be

heard;

heard; yea, (as the words are) wee doe more then make request: and though we doe not alwayes see what Gods Spirit makes us to sigh after, yet God doth. To the testimony of Scripture, I adde the testimonies of Godly and learned men, not to proove the doctrine in hand; but to shew a consent, and to proove thus much, that the thing which I avouch is no private phantasie of any man. *Easily* (saith Ambrose of God) *is hee reconciled,* (b) *if he bee instantly intreated.* Augustine saith, *Let thy desire be before him, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly: for thy desire is thy prayer, and if thy desire bee continuall, thy prayer is continuall.* Hee addes further in

Lib. 7 in Luc. c. 66. b Si impenseretur.

On Psal. 36.

the same place, that *the desire is a continuall voice, and the cry of the heart, and the inward invocation of God, which may bee made without intermission.* Againe, *To desire the helpe of grace, is the beginning of grace.* Againe: (a) *The whole life of a good Christian, is an holy will and desire. And that which thou desirest, thou seest not: but by desiring, art (as it were) inlarged and made capable, that when it shall come which thou shalt see, thou maist bee filled.* Basil saith, *Onely thou must will, and God will come of his owne accord.* (b) Bernard saith; *What, is not desire a voice? Yes a very strong voice. God heareth the desire of the poore; and a continuall desire, though wee speake nothing, is a voice continued.*

a Expo. Epist. Iob. tract. 4. cap. 3.

Hom. of humility.

b Sub. cant. Ser. 48.

(a) Lu-

(a) Luther saith, *Christ is then truely Omnipotent, and then truely raignes in us, when wee are so weake, that we can scarce give any grone.* For *Paul* saith, that one such groane is a strong cry in the eares of God, filling both Heaven and Earth. * Againe, *Very few know, how weake and small faith and hope is, under the crosse, and in temptation. For it appeares, then to bee as smoaking flaxe, which a good blast of winde would presently put out: but such as beleeve in these combates and terrours, against hope, under hope; that is, opposing themselves by faith in the promise of Christ, against the feeling of sinne, and the wrath of God, doe finde afterward that this little sparke of faith (as it appeares to reason*

a Tom. 4 pag. 124.

* Ibid fol. 156.

which

which hardly perceiveth it) is peradventure as the whole element of fire which filled all Heaven, and swalloweth up all terrours and sinnes. * Againe, The more wee finde our unworthinesse, and the lesse wee finde the promise to belong unto us, the more must wee desire them, being assured that this desire doth greatly please God, who desireth and willeth that his grace should bee earnestly desired. This doth faith, which judgeth it a precious thing, and therefore greatly hungreth and thirsteth after it, and so obtaines it. For God is delighted to fill the hungrie with good things, and to send the rich emptie away. (a) Theodore Beza saith, If thou finde not thine heart inwardly touched, pray that it may bee

* Ib. fol. 300.

(a) Resp. ad Acta Colloq. Monpel.

bee touched: for then thou must know that this desire is a pledge of the fathers will to thee. Kemnitius saith: *When I have a good desire, though it doe scarcely shew it selfe in some little and slender sigh, I must bee assured that the Spirit of God is present, and worketh his good worke.* Ursinus saith, *Faith in the most holy men in this life, is imperfect and weake. Yet nevertheless, whosoever feeles in his heart an earnest desire, and a striving against his naturall doubtings, both can, and must assure himselfe that hee is endued with true faith.* Againe, *Wicked men doe not desire the grace of the holy Spirit, whereby they may resist sinne. And therefore they are justly deprived of it: for he that earnestly desireth the holy Ghost,* Locor. compo. p. Catechis.

hath

hath it already: because this desire of the spirit cannot bee but from the spirit: as it is said, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall bee satisfied.

Epistle to Careless. Bradford said, thy sinnes are undoubtedly pardoned, &c. for God hath given thee a penitent and beleeving heart: that is, an heart which desireth to repent and beleeve: for such an one is taken of him (hee accepting the will for the deede) for a penitent and beleeving heart in deede.

Booke of the marks of Gods children. Taffine saith, Our faith may bee so small and weake, as it doth not yet bring foorth fruites that may bee lively felt of us, but if they which feele themselves in such estate, desire to have these feelings (namely of Gods favour and love) if they

ake them at Gods hands by prayer: this desire and prayer are testimonies that the Spirit of God is in them, and that they have faith already: for, is such a desire a fruit of the flesh or of the spirit? It is of the holy Spirit, who bringeth it forth onely in such as he dwels in, &c. Then these holy desires and prayers being the motions of the holy Ghost in us, are testimonies of our faith, although they seeme to us small and weake. As the woman that feeleth the mooving of a childe in her body, though very weake, assureth her selfe that she hath conceived, and that shee goeth with a live childe. So, if we have these motions, these holy affections and desires before mentioned, let us not doubt, but that we have the holy Ghost (who is

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the author of them) dwelling in us, and consequently that wee have also faith. Againe, hee saith: First, *If thou hast begunne to hate and flye sinne.* 2 *If thou feelest that thou art displeased at thy infirmities and corruptions:* 3. *If having offended God, thou feelest a griefe, and a sorrow for it:* 4 *If thou desire to abstaine:* 5 *If thou avoidest the occasions:* 6: *If thou travellest to doe thy endeavour:* 7. *If thou prayest to God to give thee grace:* *All these holy affections proceeding from none other then from the Spirit of God, ought to bee so many pledges and testimonies, that hee is in thee.*

Psal. 6. Master Knoxe saith, *Albeit your paines sometimes be so horrible, that you finde no release nor comfort, neither in spi-*

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rit nor body, yet if thy heart can onely sob unto God, despaire not, you shall obtaine your hearts desire. And destitute you are not of faith: for at such a time as the flesh, naturall reason, the law of God, the present torment, the dvell at once doe cry, God is angry, and therefore, there is neither helpe nor remedie to bee hoped for at his hands: at such time I say, to sobbe to God, is the demonstration of the secret seede of God, which is hidden in Gods elect Children: and that onely sobbe, is unto God a more acceptable sacrifice, then without this crosse, to give our bodies to bee burnt, even for the truths sake. More testimonies might bee alleadged, but these shall suffice.

Against this point of Doctrine

ctrine, it may be alleadged, that if desire to beleeve in our weakenesse bee faith indeede; then some are justified, and may bee saved wanting a lively apprehension and full perfection of Gods mercy in Christ. *Answ.* Iustifying faith in regard of his nature, is alwayes one and the same, and the essentiall propertie thereof, is, to apprehend Christ with his benefits, and to assure the very conscience thereof. And therefore without some apprehension and assurance there can bee no justification or salvation in them that for age are able to beleeve. Yet there bee certaine degrees and measures of true faith. There is a strong faith, which causeth a full apprehension

hension and perswasion of Gods mercy in Christ. This measure of faith the Lord vouchsafed *Abraham*, *David*, *Paul*, the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs of God. It were a blessed thing if all beleevers might attaine unto this height of lively faith, to say with *Paul*, I am perswaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing else shall bee able to seperate us from the love of God in Christ: but all cannot, therefore there is another degree of faith lower then the former, and yet true faith, called a little or weake faith, and it also hath a power to apprehend and apply the promise of salvation, but as yet by reason of weakenesse, it is infolded (as it were)

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and wrapt up in the heart, as the leafe and blossome in the bud. For such persons as have this weake faith, can say indeed, that they beleeve their sinnes to be pardoned, and that seriously in their hearts they desire to have them pardoned: but as yet they cannot say, that they are without all doubt pardoned. And yet the mercy of God is not wanting unto them. For in that they doe, and can desire, and endeavour to apprehend, they doe indeede apprehend, God accepting the desire to doe the thing, for the thing done. This which I say will the better appeare, if the grounds thereof be considered. Faith doth not justifie in respect of it selfe, because it is an acti-

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on or vertue, or because it is strong, lively, and perfect: but in respect of the object thereof, namely, Christ crucified, whom faith apprehendeth, as hee is set foorth unto us in the Word and Sacraments. It is Christ that is the authour and matter of our Iustice, and it is hee that applyeth the same unto us: as for faith in us, it is but an instrument to apprehend and receive that which Christ for his part offereth and giveth. Therefore, if faith erre not in his proper object, but follow the promise of God, though it doe but weakely apprehend, or at the least cause a man onely to indeavour and desire to apprehend, it is true faith and justifieth. Though our apprehension

prehenſion be neceſſary, yet our ſalvation ſtands rather in this, that God apprehends us for his owne, then that we apprehend him for ours, *Phil.* 3. verſe 12. And rather in this, that we are knowne of him, then that we know him, Gal. 4. 9.

*But of this concluſion ſprings another not to be omitted, that God accepts the indeavour of the whole man to obey, for perfect obedience it ſelfe.*

That is, if men endeavour to pleaſe God in all things, God will not judge their doing by the rigour of his law: but will accept their little and weake endeavour, to doe that which they can do by his grace, as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But

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here remember, I put this Caveat: that this endeavour must bee in and by the whole man, the very minde, conscience, will, and affections, doing that which they can in their kinds, and thus the endeavour to obey, which is a fruite of the Spirit, shall be distinguished from civill righteousnesse, which may be in Heathen men, and is onely in the outward, and not in the inward man. The truth of the conclusion appeares by that which the Prophet *Malachie* saith, that God will spare them that feare him, as a Father spares his childe: who accepts the thing done, as well done, if the childe shew his good will to please his Father, and to doe what he can.

IIII.

## IIII. Conclusion.

*To see and feele in our selves the want of any grace pertaining to Salvation, and to be grieved therefore, is the grace it selfe.*

### *The Exposition.*

VNderstand this conclusion as the former, namely that griefe of the heart for the want of any grace necessary to salvation, is as much with God as the grace it self.

When being in distresse, we cannot pray as we ought; God accepts the very groanes, sobbes, and sighs of the perplexed heart, as the prayer it selfe, *Rom.* 8. 26. when wee are grieved because wee cannot be grieved for our sins, it is a degree and measure

sure of godly sorrow before God. Augustine saith well: *Sometimes our prayer is lukewarme, or rather cold and almost no prayer: nay sometime it is altogether no prayer at all, and yet wee can with griefe perceive this in our selves: for if wee can but grieve because we cannot pray, wee now pray indeed.* Hierome saith, *Then wee are just, when wee doe acknowledge our selves to bee sinners*: Againe: *This is the true wisedome of man, to know himselfe to be imperfect. And (that I may so speake) the perfection of all just men in the flesh is imperfect*: Augustine againe saith, *That the vertue which is now in a just man, is thus farre forth perfect, that unto the perfection thereof, there belongs a true acknowledgement, and an humble*

Com. 4. l. 1. ad Simplici. in fine.

Lib. 1. contra Pelagianos.

*ble confession of the imperfectio*
*thereof.* A broken and contrit
heart after an offence, is a
much with God, as if there ha
beene no offence at all. An
therefore so soone as *David* af
ter his grievous fall, in heavi
nesse of heart confessed his sin
saying in effect but thus much
*I have sinned*, the Lord pronoun
ceth the pardon of his sinne i
Heaven, and that presently.

## V. Conclusion.

*Hee that hath begunne to subject*
*himselfe to Christ and hi*
*Word, though as yet hee be*
*ignorant in most points of reli*
*gion, yet if hee have care t*
*increase in knowledge, and t*

*pra-*

*practise that which he knoweth he is accepted of God, is a true beleever.*

*The Exposition.*

SVndry persons by the Evangelists, are said to beleeve, which had onely seene the miracles of Christ, and as yet had made no further proceedings but to acknowledge Christ to bee the Messias, and to submit themselves to him and his doctrine, which afterward should bee taught. On this manner the woman of Samaria beleeved, and many of the Samaritans upon her report: and a certaine ruler, by reason of a miracle wrought upon his sonne, is said to beleeve, and all his houshold, *Iohn* 4. 42, 53. When our Sa-

viour Christ commended the faith of the Apostles, terming it a rocke, against which the gates of hell should not prevaile, it was not the plentifull knowledge of the doctrine of salvation: for they were ignorant of many articles of faith, as namely, of the death, resurrection, ascension, and Kingdome of Christ: but because they beleeved him to bee the Sonne of God, and the Saviour of mankinde, and they had withall resolved themselves to cleave unto him, and the blessed doctrine of salvation, which hee taught, though as yet they were ignorant in many points. The Holy Ghost commended the faith of *Rahab*, when shee receiued the Spies: Now this her faith was in-

indeed but a seede and beginning of lively faith: for then shee had onely heard of the miracles done in Egypt, and of the deliverance of the Israelites, and was thereupon smitten with feare, and had conceived a resolution with her selfe, to joyne her selfe to the Israelites, and to worship the true God. Now these and the like, are tearmed beleevers, upon just cause: for though they be ignorant as yet, yet their ignorance shall bee no continuing or lasting ignorance: and they have excellent seedes of grace, namely, a purpose of heart to cleave to Christ, and a care to profit in the doctrine of salvation, whereof they have some little knowledge.

## VII. Conclusion.

*The foresaid beginnings of grace are counterfeit, unlesse they increase.*

### The Exposition.

THe wickednesse of mans nature, and the depth of hypocrisie is such, that a man may and can easily transforme himselfe into the counterfeit and resemblance of any grace of God. Therefore I put downe in this last conclusion a certaine note, whereby the gifts of God may be discerned, namely, that they grow up and increase, as the graine of Musterd-seed, to a great tree, & beare fruit answerably. The grace in the heart is like

like the graine of Mustard-seede in two things. First, it is small to see to, at the beginning: Secondly, after it is cast into the ground of the heart, it increaseth speedily, and spreades it selfe. Therefore, if a man at the first have but some little feeling of his wants, some weake and faint desire, some small obedience, he must not let this sparke of grace goe out, but these motions of the Spirit must be increased by the use of the Word, Sacraments, and prayer: and they must daily be stirred up by meditating, endeavouring, striving, asking, seeking, knocking. The Master delivering his Talents to his servants, saith unto them, Occupie till I come, and not

hide in the earth, *Matth.* 25. 26. *Paul* useth an excellent speech to *Timothie*: I exhort thee to stirre up the gift of God which is in thee: namely; as fire is stirred up by often blowing, and putting to of wood: 2. *Timoth.* 1. 6. As for such motions of the heart that last for a weeke, or a moneth, and after vanish away, they are not to be regarded: and the Lord by the Prophet *Osea* complaineth of them, saying, *O Ephraim, thy righteousnesse is like the morning dew,* Chap. 6.

Therefore considering, that grace, unlesse it be confirmed and exercised, is indeed no grace; I will here adde certaine rules of direction, that wee may the more easily put

in

in practice the spirituall exercise of invocation, faith, and repentance: and thereby also quicken and revive the seedes and beginnings of grace.

1. In what place so-ever thou art, whether alone or abroad, by day or by night, and whatsoever thou art doing, set thy selfe in the presence of God, let this perswasion alwayes take place in thy heart, that thou art before the living God: and do thy endeavour, that this perswasion may smite thy heart with awe and reverence, and make thee afraide to sinne. This counsell the Lord gave *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 1. *Walke before me, and be upright.* This thing also was practised by *Enoch*, who for this cause is said *to walke with God.*

2. Esteeme of every present day, as of the day of thy death; and therefore live as though thou wert dying, and doe those good duties every day that thou wouldest doe, if thou wert dying. This is Christian watchfulnesse, and remember it.

3. Make Catalogues and billes of thine owne sinnes, especially of those sinnes that have most dishonoured God, and wounded thine owne conscience: set them before thee often, especially then, when thou hast any particular occasion of renewing thy repentance, that thy heart by this dolefull sight may bee further humbled. This was *Davids* practice, when hee considered his wayes, and

turned

turned his feete to Gods commandements, *Psalme* 119. 57. and when hee confessed the sinnes of his youth, *Psalme* 25. This was *Iobs* practice, when he said he was not able to answer one of a thousand of his sinnes unto God, *Iob* 9. 1.

4. When thou first openest thine eyes in a morning, pray to God, and give him thankes heartily: God then shall have his honour: and thy heart shall bee the better for it the whole day following.

For wee see in experience, that vessels keepe long the taste of that liquor wherewith they are first seasoned. And when thou lyest downe, let that be the last also: for thou knowest not, whether thou being fallen asleepe, shalt ever rise

againe alive. Good therefore it is, that thou ſhouldeſt give up thy ſelfe into the hands of God whileſt thou art waking.

5. Labour to ſee and feele thy ſpirituall povertie, that is, to ſee the want of grace in thy ſelfe, eſpecially thoſe inward corruptions, of unbeleefe, pride, ſelfe-love, &c. Labour to be diſpleaſed with thy ſelfe: and labour to feele, that by reaſon of them thou ſtandeſt in neede of every drop of the bloud of Chriſt to heale and cleanſe thee from theſe wants: and let this practice take ſuch place with thee, that if thou bee demanded what in thine eſtimation is the vileſt of the creatures upon earth, thine heart and conſcience may anſwer with a loud voice, *I*,

*even*

*even I, by reason of mine owne sinnes*: and againe, if thou bee demaunded what is the best thing in the world for thee, thy heart and conscience may answer againe with a strong and loud cry, *One droppe of the blood of Christ to wash away my sinnes.*

6 Shew thy selfe to bee a member of Christ, and a servant of God, not onely in the generall calling of a Christian, but also in the particular calling, in which thou art placed. It is nothing for a Magistrate to be a Christian man, but he must also be a Christian Magistrate: it is not enough for a Master of a family to be a Christian man or a Christian in the Church, but he must also be a Christian in his family, and

and in the trade which he followeth daily. Not every one that is a common hearer of the Word, and a frequenter of the Lords Table, is therefore a good Christian, unlesse his conversation in his private house, and in his private affaire and dealings be sutable; There, is a man to be seene what hee is.

7 Search the Scriptures, to see what is sinne, and what is not sinne, in every action: this done, carry in thy heart a constant and resolute purpose, not to sinne in any thing: for Faith and the purpose of sinning can never stand together.

8 Let thine endeavour bee sutable to thy purpose: and therefore doe nothing at any time

time against thy conscience, rightly informed by the Word: exercise thy selfe to eschew every sinne, and to obey God in every one of his commandements, that pertaine either to the generall calling of a Christian, or thy particular calling. Thus did good *Iosias* who turned unto God with all his heart, according to *all* the Law of *Moses*, 1 *Kings* 23.25. and thus did *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, that walked in *all* the Commandements of God without reproofe, *Luke* 1.6.

9. If at any time against thy purpose and resolution, thou bee overtaken with any sinne little or great, lye not in it, but speedily recover thy selfe by repentance: humble

thy

thy selfe, confessing thine offence, and by prayer intreate the Lord to pardon the same, and that earnestly, till such time as thou findest thy conscience truly pacified, and thy care to eschew the same sinne increased.

10. Consider often of the right and proper end of thy life in this world, which is not to seeke profit, honour, pleasure, but that in serving of men, we might serve God in our callings. God could, if it so pleased him, preserve man without the ministery of man, but his pleasure is to fulfill his worke and will in the preservation of our bodies, and salvation of our soules, by the imployment of men in his service, every one according to his

his vocation. Neither is there so much as a bond-slave, but he must in and by his faithfull service to his Master, serve the Lord. Men therefore doe commonly prophane their labours and lives, by ayming at a wrong end, when all their care consisteth onely in getting sufficient maintenance for them and theirs, for the obtaining of credit, riches, and carnall commodities. For thus men serve themselves and not God, or men: much lesse doe they serve God in serving of men.

11. Give all diligence to make thy election sure, and to gather manifold tokens thereof. For this cause observe the workes of Gods providence, love, and mercy, both

both in thee and upon thee, from time to time: for the serious consideration of them, and the laying of them together, when they are many and severall, minister much direction, assurance of Gods favour and comfort. This was the practice of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 17.34. *Psal.* 25. all.

12. Thinke evermore thy present estate whatsoever it bee, to bee the best estate for thee: because whatsoever befalles thee, though it bee sicknesse, or any other affliction, or death, befals thee of the good providence of God. That this may the better be done, labour to see and acknowledge the providence of God, as well in povertie as in abundance; as well in disgrace as in good

good report, as well in ſickeneſſe as in health, as well in life as in death.

13. Pray continually; I meane; not by ſolemne and ſet praier, but by ſecret and inward ejaculations of the heart, that is, by a continuall elevation of thy minde unto Chriſt, ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, and that either by praier or giving of thankes, ſo often as any occaſion ſhall bee offered.

14. Thinke often of the worſt and moſt grievous things that may befall thee, either in this life or death, for the name of Chriſt: make a reckoning of them, and prepare thy ſelfe to beare them: that when they come, they may not ſeeme ſtrange, but be

borne

borne the more easily.

15. Make conscience of idle, vaine, unhoneſt, and ungodly thoughts: for theſe are the ſeedes and beginnings of actuall ſinne in word and in deede. This want of care in ordering and compoſing of our thoughts, is often puniſhed with a fearefull temptation in the very thought, called of Divines, *Tentatio blaſphemiarum*, a tentation of blaſphemies.

16. When any good motion or affection riſeth in the heart, ſuffer it not to paſſe away, but feede it by reading, meditating, praying.

17. Whatſoever good thing thou goeſt about, whether it bee in word or deed, doe it not in conceit of thy ſelfe, or

or in the pride of thy heart, but in humility, ascribing the power whereby thou doest thy worke, and the praise thereof to God: otherwise thou shalt finde by experience God will curse thy best doings.

18 Despise not civill honesty: good conscience and good manners must goe together: therefore remember to make conscience of lying, and of customable swearing, in common talke: contend not either in deede or word with any man, be courteous and gentle to all, good and bad: beare with mens wants and frailties, as hastinesse, frowardnesse, selfe-liking, curiousnesse, &c. passing by them as being not perceived:

ved: returne not evill for evill, but rather good for evill: use meate, drinke, and apparell, in that manner and measure, that they may further godlinesse; and may be as it were signes in which thou mayest expresse the hidden grace of thy heart: Strive not to goe beyond any, unlesse it bee in good things: goe before thine equals in giving of honour, rather then in taking of it: make conscience of thy word, and let it bee as a bond: professe no more outwardly then thou hast inwardly in heart: oppresse or defraude no man in bargaining: in all companies, either doe good, or take good.

19 Cleave not by inordinate affection to any creature,

ture, but above all things quiet and rest thy mind in Christ, above all dignitie and honour, above all cunning and policy, above all glory and honour, above all health and beautie, above all wealth and treasure, above all joy and delight, above all fame and praise, above all mirth and consolation, that a mans heart can feele or devise beside Christ.

With these rules of practice, joyne rules of meditation; whereby I propound fixe unto thee, as I finde them set downe by a learned Divine called *Victorinus Strigelius*.

I.

We must not fall away from God for any creature.

II.

Infinite eternitie is farre to be

bee preferred before the short race of this mortall life.

III.

We must hold fast the promise of grace, though wee lose all temporall blessings; and they also in death must needs be left.

IV.

Let the love of God in Christ, and the love of the Church for Christ, bee strong in thee, and prevaile against all other affections.

V.

It is the principall part of a Christian, to beleeve things invisible, to hope for things deferred, to love God when hee shewes him to be an enemie, and thus to persevere unto the end.

VI.

VI.

It is a most effectuall remedy for any griefe, to quiet our selves in a confidence of the presence and helpe of God: and to aske him, and withall to waite, either for some easement or deliverance.

VII.

All the workes of God are done in contrary meanes.

FINIS.